

Knowledge sharing activities among public sector employees: Evidence from Indonesia

Metha Djuwita Supriatna^{1*}

¹ Department of Apparatus Human Resources Management, STIA LAN Bandung Polytechnic, Bandung, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author(s) Email: methadjuwita@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Knowledge sharing has an important role in the management of any organization. It can lead to increased knowledge creation, collaboration level, and level of innovation, which, in turn, increases organizational performances. However, few studies have empirically examined the effect of knowledge sharing activities on an individual's belief in a public sector organizational setting, especially in Indonesia. This study was conducted to analyze the role of knowledge sharing in affecting the activities of creative self-efficacy within public organizations. This study used purposive sampling which designed to focus on employees who have positioned as a researcher in one of Directorate of Ministry of Public Works and Housing of the Republic of Indonesia. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Brockhus and Yu instruments. The result of this study shows that there is a positive and significant effect of knowledge sharing activities on creative self-efficacy. The higher the level of knowledge sharing activities within the organization, the more it will encourage creative self-efficacy. The majority of the respondent in this study that classified as Y generation (Millenials) was the main reason of the differences between the conclusion of this study and previous ones who argues that knowledge sharing initiatives are more difficult to be implemented in public sector organization as many of public sector officers believe that the activities of knowledge sharing meant losing power and an extra work surface.

Keywords: Creative Self-Efficacy; Individual Beliefs; Knowledge Sharing; Millenial; Public Sector

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Introduction

The concept of knowledge management explains the importance of managing the knowledge properly in organizations knowing that knowledge is valued as an important intellectual asset for the organization. The knowledge that needs to be managed by the organization is tacit and explicit knowledge which comes from individual employees then utilized as organizational knowledge. Awareness of the importance of knowledge as a strategic asset will motivate the organization, both public and private organizations, to improve their knowledge through management practices (Ahbabi *et al.*, 2017). The idea of practicing knowledge management is following the integrated knowledge management cycle developed by Koenig (2011). The first phase in the knowledge management cycle is how captured the knowledge from individuals or groups within the organization. The next phase is to share the captured knowledge with individuals or groups in the organization (knowledge sharing). The final stage in this phase is to summarize the value and the effect of the shared knowledge to be applied in the organization. Ibrahim & Heng (2017) and Tung (2018) added that a recent study found that knowledge sharing has an important role and tends to be the core of competence in knowledge management in achieving competitive advantage.

Knowledge sharing in organizations can be done either by individuals or groups. The practice of knowledge sharing in organizations is considered to be able to encourage innovation, organizational learning, and the development of the skills and abilities of individual employees, and ultimately can increase organizational productivity (Islam *et al.*, 2018). The culture in sharing knowledge within the organization is important in avoiding the loss of knowledge or the accumulation of knowledge in one employee (Becker & Zirpoli, 2017). Knowledge loss can occur if the only employee who has certain knowledge leaves the organization. While the accumulation of knowledge occurs if there are employees who don't want to share the knowledge, which can occur due to several things, such as the absence of rewards, or even don't want other people to understand more than themselves. Regarding the challenges in implementing knowledge sharing activities in different sector such as the private and public sector, Amayah (2013) argues that knowledge sharing initiatives are more difficult to be implemented in public sector organizations. The fear of losing control/power (Park & Gabbard, 2018), the anxiety of losing promotion (Donnelly, 2019), less incentive for efficiency, the complexity of organization goals (Amayah, 2013), trust and leadership (Seba *et al.*, 2012; Alsharo *et al.*, 2017), bureaucratic culture (Wulf & Butel, 2016; Hendryadi *et al.*, 2019), and extra-works perception (Yao *et al.*, 2007; Afshar Jalili & Salempour, 2019) is the

several reasons of why public sector officers tend to resist to build a knowledge-sharing culture. Besides that reason, an individual issue such as personality traits (Agyemang *et al.*, 2016; Borges *et al.*, 2019), motivational factors (Andreeva & Sergeeva, 2016; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019), creative self-efficacy (Wu *et al.*, 2012; Teng *et al.*, 2019) also considered to influences the adoption of knowledge sharing. Puente-Díaz (2016) added that not only that creativity has highly correlated with the level of innovation, creativity also play important role in helping an organization achieving the outcomes target.

Prior creative self-efficacy study has focused on the relationships between individual attributes and innovation behavior. However, few studies have empirically examined the effect of knowledge sharing activities in a public sector organizational setting on an individual's belief, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of the activities of knowledge sharing within public organizations towards creative self-efficacy.

Literature Review

Creative Self-Efficacy

In social cognitive theory, Cabrera *et al.* (2006) argue that a person's behavior is governed extensively by the exercise of self-influence that is sustainable, or what is known as self-efficacy. Hardaningtyas (2020) defined self-efficacy as individual beliefs and confidence in his/her ability to execute and finish the task. Self-efficacy concerns a person's belief in his ability to control their level of function and all the experiences that affect their lives. In conclusion, self-efficacy is considered a more central and widespread mechanism of self-regulation (Naotunna & Zhou, 2018). Furthermore, Pradesa *et al.* (2019) added that the more confident employees about their ability to do a task, the more dedicated they become to their jobs.

Tierney & Farmer (2011) then develops the concept of creative self-efficacy which is rooted in the concept of self-efficacy. Creative self-efficacy relates to a series of results that provide benefits, including the development and implementation of ideas (Newman *et al.*, 2018). Creative self-efficacy is based on employee confidence in solving problems in innovative ways. In the process of innovation, there are many obstacles to be handled, so psychological capital is needed to deal with uncertainty and failure (Hu & Zhao, 2016). Creative self-efficacy has a role in innovation by increasing self-confidence, where someone considers their ability to complete the tasks and activities by this process (Hsu *et al.*, 2011). Thus, confidence in the ability of creative thinking is the essence of creative performance which in turn allows the individual to face the challenge of effectively and efficiently

(Alotaibi, 2016). Employees with high creative self-efficacy make them strong and persistent in achieving creative targets amidst the difficulties faced, even creative self-efficacy is found as a variable that can foster creativity (Gong *et al.*, 2009).

Knowledge Sharing

The concept of knowledge classifies knowledge into two categories, tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is the knowledge that has been codified, documented. While tacit knowledge is the knowledge that is in the minds of humans, which will only be in someone's mind until someone else asks. Between these two forms of knowledge, tacit knowledge is valued as more knowledge than explicit knowledge, and it is important to capture and serve as organizational knowledge. Polanyi (1966) also believes that all knowledge is rooted in tacit knowledge. Knowledge sharing is in the second stage of the knowledge management cycle which is between the capture and application of important knowledge. Knowledge sharing involves the exchange of knowledge, experience, skills between employees through socialization, interaction, and training (Ibrahim & Heng, 2017). Lin (2007) defined knowledge sharing as the efforts to transform individual knowledge within an organization to enhance business performances. Furthermore, Knowledge sharing is defined as a process of interaction/social activity, which allows members in the organization to acquire tacit and explicit knowledge with each other, so that there is a transfer of knowledge from the source of knowledge to the recipient of knowledge (Koenig, 2011; Malik & Kanwal, 2018). As employees become increasingly involved in knowledge sharing, they will internalize a greater amount of knowledge (Yu *et al.*, 2013). Knowledge sharing allows a variety of important things to happen, such as the creation of new knowledge (Veer Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017), work efficiency (Ali & Yusof, 2004; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020), increasing the level of innovation (Huang & Li, 2009; Markovic & Bagherzadeh, 2018), and reduce unnecessary efforts (Monica Hu *et al.*, 2009).

The practice of sharing knowledge can avoid the occurrence of 'corporate amnesia', which is caused by the loss of knowledge possessed by the organization, for example, due to the release of people who have certain knowledge from the organization and have not had time to share it with others. Bock *et al.* (2005) stated that there are several factors which are considered to encourage knowledge-sharing accordingly, (1) the existence of individual benefits, related to individual interests and getting personal interests, (2) the existence of group benefits, such as sharing behavior, relationships with others, and related to community interests, (3) the existence of organizational benefits, i.e. organization and increase

organizational commitment. Furthermore, Koenig (2011) added that management support, technology, and organizational culture has a significant impact on knowledge sharing.

The Relationship Between Knowledge Sharing and Creative Self-Efficacy

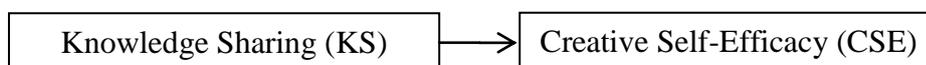
Although Amayah (2013) argues that knowledge sharing initiatives are more difficult to be implemented in public sector organization due to several reasons such as the fear of losing control/power (Park & Gabbard, 2018), the anxiety of losing promotion (Liebowitz & Megbolugbe, 2003; Donnelly, 2019), trust and leadership (Seba *et al.*, 2012; Alsharo *et al.*, 2017), bureaucratic culture (Wulf & Butel, 2016; Hendryadi *et al.*, 2019), and extra-works perception (Yao *et al.*, 2007; Afshar Jalili & Salempour, 2019). A previous study from Hu & Zhao (2016) has a clear conclusion that there was a significant link between knowledge sharing and creative self-efficacy. Therefore, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and creative self-efficacy within public sector organizations.

Methods

The study design employed in this study was mainly descriptive. A survey-based methodology was employed through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to elicit the effect of knowledge sharing activities on creative self-efficacy. This study used purposive sampling which designed to focus on employees who have positioned as a researcher in one of the Directorate of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing of the Republic of Indonesia, with total respondents were 94 researchers.

Figure 1. Research Framework



The fifteen instruments of Brockhus *et al.* (2014) were used to measured creative self-efficacy. While to measure knowledge sharing, the six instruments of Yu *et al.* (2013) were used in this study. Table 1 shows detailed information about the item of this study. Then, to check the validity and reliability of instruments, the value of the Pearson Correlation and Cronbach's Alpha was employed as the parameter criterion. Regression analysis was used in this study to test the effect of knowledge sharing activities on creative self-efficacy. Table 2 shows the detailed information about validity and reliability results. The instrument item is declared valid and reliable when the counted value (Pearson Correlation and Cronbach's

Alpha) is more than 0.300 and 0.600. Therefore, based on the description of Table 2, it can be concluded that all item measured in this study is valid and reliable.

Table 1. Variable and Item

Variable	Code	Item	Reference
Creative Self-Efficacy (CSE)	CSE1	I am not afraid to express my ideas	Brockhus <i>et al.</i> (2014)
	CSE2	I have a positive self-image	
	CSE3	I am confident that I could deal with unexpected events	
	CSE4	I feel very confident with my ability to compete with others to do the task	
	CSE5	I consider myself to be innovative	
	CSE6	I am a creative person	
	CSE7	I can solve problems efficiently	
	CSE8	I trust my creative abilities	
	CSE9	Compared to my friends, my ideas are outstanding	
	CSE10	I proved that I can find at least one solution for any difficult situation	
	CSE11	I can handle tasks that require creative thinking	
	CSE12	I am good at proposing "out of the box" solutions	
	CSE13	I am confident I can develop creative ideas for almost any problem	
	CSE14	Whenever difficulties come, I usually find several solutions	
	CSE15	I don't consider myself as creative (R)	
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	KS1	I often help my coworkers to communicate better	Yu <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	KS2	I often encourage colleagues to bring up good ideas and suggestions so it can enhance the overall service standards at work	
	KS3	I often help colleagues with problem-solving	
	KS4	I will take action to help whenever my colleagues face difficulty	
	KS5	I will demonstrate how to do something when things are difficult to explain	
	KS6	When I am preparing a document, I am willing to write down what I know for my colleagues to refer to	

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Result

Variable/Item	Pearson Correlation	Criteria	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria	Decision
CSE			0.926	> 0.600	Reliable
CSE1	0.558	> 0.300			Valid
CSE2	0.474	> 0.300			Valid
CSE3	0.569	> 0.300			Valid
CSE4	0.634	> 0.300			Valid
CSE5	0.837	> 0.300			Valid
CSE6	0.910	> 0.300			Valid
CSE7	0.578	> 0.300			Valid
CSE8	0.852	> 0.300			Valid
CSE9	0.717	> 0.300			Valid
CSE10	0.776	> 0.300			Valid
CSE11	0.896	> 0.300			Valid
CSE12	0.793	> 0.300			Valid
CSE13	0.748	> 0.300			Valid
CSE14	0.590	> 0.300			Valid
CSE15	0.611	> 0.300			Valid
KS			0.860	> 0.600	Reliable
KS1	0.689	> 0.300			Valid
KS2	0.748	> 0.300			Valid
KS3	0.863	> 0.300			Valid
KS4	0.870	> 0.300			Valid
KS5	0.786	> 0.300			Valid
KS6	0.676	> 0.300			Valid

Result and Discussion

The respondent in this study reflected the age of the general public sector in Indonesia which mainly consist of X generation (born 1965-1979) were 29% and Y generation/millennials (born 1980-2001) were 71%. While the majority of the respondent in

this study can be described as male (71%) with most of them hold Master Degree education (83%).

Table 3. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	t-Value	t-Table Criteria	Sig.	Sig. Criteria	Decision
H ₁ KS -> CSE	5.458	> 1.687	0.000	< 0.005	Accepted

An independent sample t-test was employed in this study to test the proposed hypotheses whether knowledge sharing influences creative self-efficacy. Table 3 shows that the value of t-tested was 5.458 (which is higher than the value of t-statistics 1.687) with a significant value of 0.000 (which is lower than the significances criteria of 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that H₁ of this study was accepted, which means that there is a positive and significant relationship between knowledge sharing (KS) and creative self-efficacy (CSE). The higher the level of knowledge sharing activities within the organization, the more it will encourage creative self-efficacy.

This result of this study supports a previous study conducted by Hu & Zhao (2016) that stated that there was a significant effect between knowledge sharing and creative self-efficacy. The majority of the respondent in this study that classified as Y generation (Millenials) was the main reason of the differences between the conclusion of this study and previous ones who argues that knowledge sharing initiatives are more difficult to be implemented in public sector organization as many of public sector officers believe that the activities of knowledge sharing meant losing power and an extra work surface. McHenry & Ash (2013) support the argument by stating that rather than X generation that likely to be more worried about competition, potential job loss, and the lack of incentives to share, Y generation (Millenials) are more adaptive to challenges and cultural differences, didn't like to plan for long periods, multitasking, open-minded, needy for feedback, and easy to collaborate (Bencsik *et al.*, 2016).

The nature of respondents in this study that classified as researchers also considered having an important role in affecting the knowledge sharing on creative self-efficacy. A qualified researcher should be open minded and have a willingness to share knowledge with their co-researcher to produce a better result of research. Tang & Kaufman (2017) and Srikoon *et al.* (2018) added that the creativity of thinking (uniqueness) was one of the personal characteristics of researchers that can enhance self-perceived creativity and creative motivation. The level of creative self-efficacy can increase significantly by implementing

knowledge sharing. A previous study from Jen *et al.* (2020) and Hu *et al.* (2020) concluded that the activities of knowledge sharing like mentoring and collaboration prove significantly can enhance the level of creative confidence of employees.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Unlike, the prior study that claims that knowledge sharing activities are rarely to be found in public sector organizations rather than in private sectors due to several reasons. The result of this study concluded the opposite. There is a positive and significant relationship between knowledge sharing (KS) and creative self-efficacy (CSE) within a public organizational setting. The activities of knowledge sharing like mentoring and collaboration prove significantly affect the level of creative self-efficacy of public sector officers which means that the higher the level of knowledge sharing activities within the organization, the more it will encourage creative self-efficacy. The majority of the respondent in this study that classified as Y generation (millennial) considered as the main reason of the differences between the conclusion of this study and previous ones who argues that there are many of public sector officers believes that the activities of knowledge sharing will cause them negative impact such as losing power, losing an opportunity, and an extra work surface. Also, the respondent criterion of this study that classified as researchers affect the relationship of knowledge sharing toward creative self-efficacy as they have to be compelled to do knowledge sharing activities and collaborate with their co-researcher to produce the better result of research.

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